

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 NIC-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 DRC-01 /134 W

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R 052020Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5553

INFO AMCONSUL HONGKONG

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1648

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CH, UK

SUBJ: BRITISH AMBASSADOR COMMENTS ON PRC

1. ON MARCH 4 MY WIFE AND I WERE THE LUNCHEON GUESTS OF BRITISH AMBASSADOR SIR DONALD HOPSON AND MRS HOPSON. HOPSON WAS CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN PEKING 1965-67. DURING THE LUNCHEON HE TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT CHINA AND HIS REMARKS MAY BE OF INTEREST TO ALL "CHINA WATCHERS."

2. DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, WHICH COINCIDED WITH HOPSON'S SERVICE IN THE PRC, HOPSON WAS DRAGGED FROM HIS EMBASSY, PUBLICLY BEATEN AND IMPRISONED. HE TOLD ME THAT THE PRC AMBASSADOR IN BUENOS AIRES, ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIS GOVERNMENT, RECENTLY HAD APOLOGIZED FOR AND EXPRESSED REGRET OVER HIS TREATMENT BY THE RED GUARDS IN THAT TRYING PERIOD.

3. HOPSON SAID THAT HE IS CONVINCED VERY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS ARE CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IN THE PRC, CENTERING ON A LOOMING POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHAIRMAN MAO AND CHOU EN LAI. I NOTE THAT THIS WEEK'S PRESS REPORTS MAO AS PUBLICLY ATTACKING CHOU EN LAI.

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4. IT IS HOPSON'S OPINION THAT THE PLANE ON WHICH LIN PIAO WAS

TRAVELING WAS NOT BLOWN UP OR SHOT DOWN. HE TENDS TOWARD THE
VERSION ACCORDING TO WHICH LIN PIAO, CONVINCED THAT MAO HAD
ORDERED HIS ELIMINATION, ESCAPED IN A PLANE. SINCE THERE HAD
BEEN NO TIME TO PROPERLY SERVICE AND PREPARE THE PLANE FOR A
LONG FLIGHT, IT IS BELIEVED IT MAY HAVE CRASHED OR UNDERGONE
A FORCED LANDING. THE PRESENT WHEREABOUTS OF LIN PIAO OR
INDEED WHETHER HE IS STILL ALIVE REMAINS A MYSTERY ACCORDING
TO THE AMBASSADOR.
HILL

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Message Attributes

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